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ABSTRACT

The practical aspects of planning and successfully implementing a busing program for school desegregation are emphasized in this guide. The author points out that school districts that don't wait for a court order to start planning school desegregation stand a much better chance of smooth implementation. From interviews with school administrators, as well as from a review of the literature, the author has identified four major issues that are involved in making busing for desegregation work: (1) choosing an efficient and fair busing plan; (2) gaining community support by involving parents, students, and community members in decision making, by school administrators showing strong leadership and support for the plan, and by communicating effectively with the community; (3) making sure the plan runs smoothly by handling discipline problems and violence even-handedly and equitably, and by orienting parents and students to changes brought about by busing; and (4) making necessary improvements in facilities, curriculum, and staff development. (Author/DS)

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Making Your Busing Plan Work: A GUIDE TO DESEGREGATION

Jo Ann Mazzarella

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CONTENTS

Foreword	v
Introduction	1
Why Parents Fear Busing	2
A Word to Those Not under Court Order	3
Background	5
Planning	7
Choosing a Busing Plan	8
Socioeconomic Mixing	11
Gaining Community Support	12
Involving Others in Decision-Making	12
Positive Leadership	13
Communication with the Community	15
Making the Plan Run Smoothly	17
Busing Efficiently	17
Handling Violence	19
Discipline Problems	19
Orientation Activities	20
The End of the Line: Better Schools	22
Curriculum Development	23
Staff Development	25
Conclusion	28
Bibliography	29
Interviews	34

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FOREWORD

Both the Association of California School Administrators and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management are pleased to cooperate in producing the *School Management Digest*, a series of reports designed to offer educational leaders essential information on a wide range of critical concerns in education.

At a time when decisions in education must be made on the basis of increasingly complex information, the *Digest* provides school administrators with concise, readable analyses of the most important trends in schools today, as well as points up the practical implications of major research findings.

By special cooperative arrangement, the series draws on the extensive research facilities and expertise of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. The titles in the series were planned and developed cooperatively by both organizations. Utilizing the resources of the ERIC network, the Clearinghouse is responsible for researching the topics and preparing the copy for publication by ACSA.

The author of this report, Jo Ann Mazzarella, was commissioned by the Clearinghouse as a research analyst and writer.

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INTRODUCTION

"Black child injured in anti-busing demonstration"

"KKK's antibusing rally triggers violent protest"

"Busing plan provokes exodus from city schools"

These newspaper headlines appeared during fall 1977. At the same time, the following equally true but less sensational headlines could have appeared (but did not):

"Stockton completes last stage of massive busing program without incident"

"Pasadena begins eighth year of peaceful busing"

"Statistics show 1971 Oxnard busing plan has produced no increase in 'white flight' "

The absence of violence or of white flight, however, rarely makes newspaper headlines.

Although the serious problems in cities like Boston or Columbus ought not to be minimized, the truth is that every year many school districts implement busing-for-desegregation plans without violence or change in their school populations. Furthermore, many of these schools manage to avoid major problems with discipline, student-teacher interaction, or drops in achievement scores. Other cities, after a tumultuous first year, have fewer problems every year thereafter. Perhaps these schools are the exceptions that prove the rule, but if so, it is strange that there are so many of them.

Why do some districts succeed in implementing busing programs and others fail? One of the reasons, of course, is that it is harder to do in some districts than in others.

It is tough to introduce busing into large cities (as it is tough to accomplish many things in large cities these days); bus rides are longer, the threat of violence is more real, and ghetto schools are poorer in facilities and educational opportunities. On the other hand, it seems safe to say that an ideal

district in which to introduce busing would be small or medium-sized, politically liberal, fairly affluent, and having a population less than 50 percent nonwhite. These things school administrators cannot change.

Yet successful busing for desegregation is more than just a matter of luck. In some large cities busing goes well, while in some smaller districts it fails altogether. Although busing is nowhere simple or easy, there are things that administrators *can* change that have an enormous effect on its success.

After formulating busing programs throughout the United States, Finger concluded that "busing need not be a calamitous event which tears cities apart and drives those who can leave to the suburbs, but to avoid calamity requires procedures which deal with the issues and problems involved."

Some of the important issues and problems involved appeared to be:

- choosing an efficient and fair plan
- gaining community support
- making sure the plan runs smoothly
- making necessary improvements in facilities and programs

Knowing how to do these things effectively often can mean the difference between success and failure.

Why Parents Fear Busing

A successful busing program rests firmly on an understanding of why busing can be frightening to parents of all races. At first glance it is difficult to understand why busing seems so terrifying to so many. It is not because it is dangerous; the Commission on Civil Rights cites National Safety Council data showing that children are *twice* as safe on the bus as walking to school. It is not because it is unpleasant to children; actually, most children find bus rides pretty exciting. In fact, as Schofield put it in her analysis of the controversy surrounding busing, "It is ironic that the familiar yellow school bus, for many a source of pleasant childhood memories, has assumed the properties of the serpent in Eden, spreading havoc and destruction wherever it goes."

Many observers believe that the fear of busing is simply based on racism. Yet surprisingly enough, it is not just the prospect of desegregation that makes busing so frightening. The Commission on Civil Rights has pointed out that "a succession of public opinion polls and referenda votes have shown that most people favor school integration but oppose busing." While many critics see such a position as merely a guise to hide racist attitudes (undoubtedly this is sometimes the case), it is also true that there *are* things about busing that are frightening even to nonracists.

What parents of all races who oppose busing are afraid of is not just busing *or* integration but long bus rides to reach schools with programs poorly suited to their children's needs. They are afraid of sending their children off to schools where they will be harrassed and where they as parents have no political control. As one San Francisco administrator put it, "It's not the busing; it's what's at the end of the line."

School administrators cannot eliminate parents' fears about racial integration. They do have control, however, over ensuring that many of parents' fears about busing are not justified. Most of all, it is the administrators' ability to affect "what's at the end of the line" that is the key.

The pages that follow are designed to aid administrators who have received a court order to end segregation in their schools. They do not deal with the difficult question of whether busing is the right way or the wrong way to do this, but they are based on the realization that moving large numbers of children out of neighborhood schools is, in most cities, the *only* way to achieve racial balance and satisfy the courts.

A Word to Those Not under Court Order

In September 1977, the California State Board of Education adopted new regulations concerning desegregation. Although these regulations contain no specific sanctions, they do contain guidelines for school districts who want to desegregate but are not under court order. These regulations contain guidelines for:

- conducting a racial and ethnic survey
- developing criteria that can help districts determine if their schools are segregated
- formulating a plan for the alleviation and prevention of segregation

School administrators who have not received a court order but are still operating segregated school systems may choose to avoid thinking about an issue as volatile and divisive as busing. Yet, for many school districts it is only a matter of time until a suit is filed and a court order handed down. At that time it is those school districts who have begun planning now who will have a better chance of success. In fact, it is those administrators who avoid a court order by implementing desegregation voluntarily who will be able to set schedules that are realistic for their districts and who will have the most control over the type of plan they will have.

BACKGROUND

Local school officials may be tempted to throw up their hands at the judicial snarl surrounding busing.

Schofield

Since 1954 the nation's courts have struggled to discover the implications of *Brown v. Board of Education*. If one wades through the hundreds of court cases surrounding school segregation, one can find almost as many different interpretations. Does *Brown* apply to de facto (unintentional) segregation as well as to de jure (legally required)? And, more importantly, what remedies can the courts require?

Some judges (*Deal v. Board of Education*, 1965; *Briggs v. Elliot*, 1955) have interpreted *Brown* as applying only to very strictly defined de jure segregation. Other judges have broadened the definition of de jure to include situations like those in which school districts deliberately gerrymander school district or school attendance boundaries (*Taylor v. Board of Education*, 1961). Still other cases (*Jackson v. Pasadena City School District*, 1963) have ended in schools being ordered to "alleviate racial imbalance in schools regardless of its cause."

Regarding remedies required for desegregation, the record is almost as confusing, partly because, as Schofield notes, "the Supreme Court has steered clear of rendering an absolute verdict on busing." In *Green v. School Board of New Kent County* (1968), the Supreme Court clearly declared unacceptable any freedom-of-choice plan that did not actually result in substantial racial mixing. The Court has been less unequivocal, however, on its support of busing as a remedy for desegregation. In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education* (1971) the Court found that while busing was "not an impermissible tool for desegregation," there were broad limitations on its use, including "when the time or distance of travel is so great as to impinge on the educational process."

While the Supreme Court's decision in *Milliken v. Bradley*

(1974) was once thought to mean that cross-district busing between city and suburb would not be required to remedy desegregation, the Court's refusal in 1976 to hear *Evans v. Buchanan* (1974) may indicate a new trend. In this case it was found that when state action (here a Delaware statute) maintains or enhances segregated school districts, an interdistrict remedy is necessary.

The only thing to emerge clearly from a survey of the judicial history of busing is that every year more school districts are being ordered to desegregate and that busing is most often the means by which this desegregation must be accomplished.

PLANNING

That effective planning is important when beginning to institute a busing plan is so obvious that it goes without saying. And yet, over and over, administrators and theoreticians who know anything about busing keep saying it—why?

When one looks at busing plans throughout the country, apparently one reason for failure is something as simple as lack of planning. Perhaps one reason for this is that the prospect of busing is so frightening that school people try to think about it as little as possible in the hope that it will just go away. But Chesler, Guskin, and Erenberg have noticed that "the reluctance of many superintendents to face these problems and the failure of some plans that have been tried testify to the need for more systematic and effective planning for the changes racial segregation requires."

Conversely, school systems that have moved ahead smoothly in desegregation programs credit much of their success to good planning. Norman Brekke, superintendent of Oxnard elementary schools, told the writer in a telephone interview that Oxnard schools began planning for desegregation as soon as the class action suit was filed. The Parent Teacher Association and other groups immediately began to study the problem and to consider alternatives, and the University of California Bureau of Intergroup Relations was called in to make recommendations. Because Oxnard's May 12, 1971, court order had to be implemented by the following September, such advance planning was probably crucial.

One excellent aid in planning is a timeline, helpful because it not only arranges everything that needs to be done in a logical order, but provides a way to set down deadlines for each component of the plan. Smith, Downs, and Lachman have drawn up an exhaustive timeline of planning activities required to achieve effective desegregation. The Denver Public Schools during their 1974 desegregation efforts prepared a publication

called *Preparation for Integration*, scheduling such things as inservice education sessions, school information centers, and interschool visitation programs.

Administrators involved in planning a busing program can learn a lot from the experiences of other districts. Although reading about desegregation is helpful, even better is an actual visit to a similar district that has made it through the ordeal. So advises Ray Berry, superintendent of California's Riverside Unified School District, in a letter to the writer:

> If anyone were seriously considering a major integration effort in a school district, I would strongly urge an in-depth visit to districts such as ours. The task is far too complex to encompass in written reports. Also, attitudes and opinions may be at least as important as facts.

Similarly, Peter Hagen, Pasadena's administrative director for planning, research, and development, invites those interested in seeing a "very sophisticated and efficient transportation system" to "come to Pasadena."

Other help in planning for desegregation in California can come from the California State Department of Education's Office of Intergroup Relations. Although this office does not give assistance concerning busing per se, it does give technical assistance designing desegregation plans, including pupil assignment patterns. Representatives from this office are available to hold workshops or to work with superintendents and their cabinets, planning committees, or community groups.

Choosing a Busing Plan

Although most experts recommend that administrators leave major decisions about the desegregation plan to the community, administrators need to be knowledgeable enough about busing plans to give guidance to committee members and to carry out the plan wisely.

Even though some court orders are very detailed in specifying how desegregation is to be carried out, most judges set down guidelines or percentage requirements and leave it to school districts to formulate how these will be satisfied. In

California, many judges have used the old "California Guidelines" recommended by the State Board of Education until 1970, which required that no school deviate more than 15 percent from the percentage of minorities present in the school district. Thus a district with 30 percent minorities could have no school with more than 45 percent minorities or less than 15 percent. For most districts, satisfying these and similar requirements necessitates busing.

An Office of Education publication does a good job of explaining the basics of the most important techniques for desegregation, including:

- school pairing
- reorganization of grade structure
- school closing and consolidation
- educational parks

Another volume in this series, authored by Chesler, Guskin, and Erenberg, offers advice on details of drawing up a plan, including such often-forgotten aspects as:

- preliminary testing of parts of the plan
- changes in staff duties
- reallocation of school facilities

One of the most popular elementary desegregation plans is the "Princeton Plan" in which a primarily minority school is paired with a largely Anglo school so that one school serves all races in kindergarten through third grade and the other serves all races in grades four through six. In most places, minority children in the early grades are bused to the K-3 school in an Anglo neighborhood, while Anglo children are bused to the minority neighborhood in the last few grades.

Variations on this plan include the one in Stockton, California, where regular paired schools are augmented by special magnet schools and where all kindergartners attend neighborhood schools. In Charlotte, North Carolina, the division is between grades four and six with minority children being bused for more years than are Anglo children. In Oxnard, California, the Princeton Plan is combined with walk-in schools in inte-

grated neighborhoods (so that it is possible for parents to flee from busing, though not from integration).

In Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, a similar plan provides for "clustering" of several white schools with one black school rather than pairing. In a telephone interview with the writer, Ron Schnee, liaison with a committee charged with reassessing Oklahoma City's busing program, expressed his belief that clustering is superior to pairing because it gives more flexibility. It should be noted that the term "pairing" is confusing in districts like Denver where more than two schools can be "paired."

Plans for desegregating junior or senior high schools usually involve retaining original grade organization and pairing or clustering minority and Anglo schools. An exception is the plan used in Berkeley in which all junior high schools in minority neighborhoods have become ninth-grade centers while all seventh- and eighth-graders go to school in Anglo neighborhoods.

Although the courts usually allow some flexibility in deciding how many minority students will be bused, recent decisions have disallowed busing of minority students only. As Holden has pointed out, minorities in most communities resent bearing too large a share of the inconveniences of busing. In addition, Finger contends that it is usually difficult to obtain community support for plans that include busing from some segregated neighborhoods but not from others, or busing students out of integrated neighborhoods.

Many educators have looked to magnet schools as a possible means of achieving voluntary desegregation. Brandstetter and Foster describe the Houston plan in which children can choose among schools specializing in everything from music to children's literature to aerodynamics. Yet these schools serve only 5,000 of Houston's 211,000 students. "As Houston School officials are the first to point out, the magnet school program there is not a racial integration program for the district as a whole," Levine and Moore have emphasized.

Magnet schools are compatible with a desegrated program such as the one in Pasadena where both fundamental and alter-

native schools augment the regular program and accept students in accordance with court-appointed guidelines.

Most courts nowadays include desegregation of faculties as an important part of desegregation orders. Decisions such as the one in San Francisco also demand recruiting and upgrading of minority teachers. In choosing a desegregation plan, school districts must pay close attention to the smooth desegregation of the school staff.

Socioeconomic Mixing

Some authorities on busing recommend taking into account the socioeconomic characteristics of students when planning student assignments but are vague on how this information might be used. Is integration of different socioeconomic groups something to aim for or to avoid? At least one administrator, Pasadena's Peter Hagen, believes that mixing extremely different socioeconomic groups creates more problems than it solves. Hagen told the writer that mixing very affluent students with very poor students was one reason some affluent students in Pasadena have fled to private schools.

Other administrators disagree. Riverside's Superintendent Ray Berry expressed to the writer his belief that integrating vastly different socioeconomic groups is just as important as integrating different racial groups. Berry thinks that to do this, school people must recognize and learn to deal with the values and attitudes of diverse socioeconomic groups.

Frelow reports that when the integration plan for Berkeley was drawn up, there was an effort to achieve socioeconomic as well as racial balance. This was done by using a method for clustering socioeconomic as well as racial groups.

GAINING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Experiences of school districts across the nation make it clear that without community support, it does not much matter whether schools are clustered or paired or if they've got the best bilingual program in the state. Without the support of parents, students, and teachers, desegregation is going to be a lonely, frustrating, thankless job.

Involving Others in Decision-Making

Chesler, Guskin, and Erenberg state that "if the superintendent chooses not to involve community groups in planning school desegregation, he does not therefore vanquish opposition; he merely delays its appearance." Just about everybody who theorizes about successful implementation of any type of desegregation plan agrees that community involvement in decision-making is essential to gaining community support. Administrators cannot merely formulate plans behind closed doors and then "sell" them to those affected. As Monti and Laue note, students and parents must feel that they can claim ownership of the desegregation plan.

Throughout the country, those actually involved with implementing busing plans cite community involvement as of utmost importance. An *American School Board Journal* article, "Where Planning and Board Unity . . . ," quotes a Racine, Wisconsin, board member who cites "strong community input" as one of the reasons for Racine's success in busing. Lucas notes that good results in the merger of Princeton and Lincoln Heights, Ohio, can be partially attributed to a plan organized "by the people and for the people" and including input from students, faculty, parents, and community groups.

Conversely, Rubin maintains that one of the reasons for virulent opposition to an ill-fated busing plan in Richmond, California, was the community's anger at having no real power over what form the plan would take. Although a lay study

commission was appointed and public discussions were held, real decisions were ultimately made by school administrators.

Sullivan, listing the lessons he learned as the superintendent involved in Berkeley's successful voluntary implementation of busing in 1968, cites the necessity for community involvement as one of the first. Frelow reports that in Berkeley community suggestions for integration plans were solicited at districtwide meetings. Later a Lay Citizens Advisory Council helped evaluate the various plans and were the prime backers of the plan finally accepted by the board.

In Tampa, Florida, in 1971, community input came through a 156-member citizens committee representing people from all walks of life, including students. This committee held open meetings, reviewed all options, and ultimately developed the plan. Knorr calls this committee the reason for Tampa's smooth implementation.

In satisfying a court order for desegregation, administrators must make it clear that community debate will center only on *how* the order is to be carried out and not *whether* it will be carried out. Committees must never lose sight of the fact that the law is to be obeyed in spite of their personal feelings about busing.

Positive Leadership

"The single most important factor influencing the quality of desegregation achieved in any district is the nature of the leadership provided by the local school board and superintendent," as Smith, Downs, and Lachman point out. For administrators lukewarm or frightened about the prospect of busing, the temptation may be great to withhold support of the desegregation program or even to attempt to circumvent a court order. Yet those who study desegregation experiences have found that this is a sure road to trouble.

Most observers agree that administrators and school boards who waffle on whether a court order is to be carried out are going to be encouraging disruption and even violent protest. Knorr, after an exhaustive study of desegregation in twenty-nine school districts, maintains that

> officials who are committed to desegregation and act decisively to ensure peaceful implementation are likely to be rewarded with a relatively smooth peaceful transition. . . . Conversely, when school administrators and other public officials are opposed to school desegregation and attempt to appease opponents, the voices of resisters often are stronger than constitutional imperatives. . . . The result is turmoil and confusion and sometimes violence.

Knorr suggests that good ways of showing support include making public statements in support of school desegregation, appointing human relations committees, and initiating activities and programs to facilitate desegregation.

On the other hand, Holden, looking at early, abortive efforts to institute busing in Providence, Rhode Island garnered lessons in "how *not* to desegregate schools." Things she lists that contributed to failure of desegregation plans include:

- failure of the superintendent to strongly support his plan
- failure of the board to support the superintendent's plan
- failure of the board to assume responsibility for a plan
- failure to become committed to any definite course of action

Absence of strong positive leadership appears to be one of the reasons that efforts to institute busing in Boston have produced such turmoil. A school committee that was described by the court as "obstructionist and intransigent" contributed little toward community acceptance of the program, while allegations by leaders that the plan would probably spark violence became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Riverside's Superintendent Ray Berry emphasized to the writer his belief that for a busing plan to proceed smoothly the board and superintendent must strongly take the position that it is going to succeed. Although Riverside is an unusual district because it began busing voluntarily as long ago as 1965, administrators implementing the plan faced many of the same problems other administrators have faced when gaining community support for a court-ordered plan.

Integration Update, a publication from Berry's office, is even more vehement on the subject of administrative support:

At the local level, opposition by school board members and superintendents is deadly. Staunch, courageous, unified commitment is virtually a must in success.

Communication with the Community

Not every individual in a community can be involved in formulating the busing plan, but every person must be informed about the plan. Many observers and school administrators consider informing the community adequately—before, during, and after implementation—as one of the most important ways of gaining support and minimizing resistance. Smith, Downs, and Lachman recommend that "before and into the first year of desegregation, school authorities should consider establishing proper community relations as their top priority job."

Raffel cites problems in Wilmington, Maryland, as evidence of what happens when school administrators fail to communicate about busing. He believes that lack of communication

- heightens the public's feelings of alienation
- minimizes public support
- prolongs unreal expectations that the busing plan may be avoided

Knorr mentions effective methods of communicating about desegregation used by school districts throughout the country, including TV programs explaining the plan, open meetings, and information centers staffed by community volunteers. Hendrick describes efforts at one-to-one communication in Riverside, California. In this program, funded by Title I, eleven "community aides" visited each of the parents whose children were to be bused. The aides explained the reason for the busing and the standards of conduct and attendance regulations at the new school. All the aides were nonprofessionals, chosen because they were felt to be able to communicate well with parents.

Sullivan notes that his experiences implementing busing in Berkeley taught him how important it was to keep the

community informed. Besides holding numerous public meetings, the Berkeley School District used three mailings to explain the plan to every person in the district. The first mailing outlined the plan, the second filled in the details, and the third, mailed after the plan was implemented, dealt with how the plan was working. Included was information on bus schedules, the cost of the program, the length of the bus rides, and how discipline problems would be handled.

Probably the most effective elements in Berkeley's public relations materials were the photographs of children of all races working and playing together. A photograph of two first-grade girls smiling shyly at each other on a predesegregation field trip goes a long way toward making the spectre of desegregation a lot less frightening.

Smith, Downs, and Lachman, after analyzing 1,100 studies of school desegregation, came to a somewhat unusual conclusion about communication. They maintain that communications efforts must vary depending on the intensity of negative feelings against a court order. Where negative feelings run high, they recommend confining initial communication to small groups of key leaders like the mayor, newspaper publisher, and civil rights leaders. This is intended to win the support of these leaders without providing a forum for community protest. This plan requires beginning intensive communications with the whole community after opening day. In communities where feelings against desegregation are not strong, they recommend informing the entire community from the beginning.

Much of the burden of communicating with parents about a busing program usually falls on the principal. Elementary superintendent Norman Brekke credited Oxnard's articulate principals with responsibility for success of their busing program. Pasadena's Peter Hagen echoed these sentiments, adding that because principals are the key liaison between the community and the school system, they need intensive training in human relations.

MAKING THE PLAN RUN SMOOTHLY

A school district that has put a lot of effort into planning and keeping communication channels open probably has a better than average chance of having a successful busing program. Yet there are still important aspects to consider.

Busing Efficiently

Most experts agree that something as simple as an efficient transportation system can have a lot to do with whether a busing plan is workable and acceptable to the community. Finger believes busing plans that work include:

- a well-managed transportation system with on-time buses
- fast, efficient routes
- a system for busing for afterschool activities and emergencies

Yvon Johnson, whose Office of Planning and Evaluation oversees desegregation matters in San Francisco, expressed to the writer his opinion that districts that shortchange on the transportation system will face mounting objections from parents. In his view, administrators must balance money-saving considerations with convenience to parents.

In San Francisco, a commercial bus company holds a contract to bus students. This saves both on capital investment and number of administrators needed to oversee the system.

In this city, not all students actually go to the schools to which they are assigned for desegregation. Students are allowed to transfer to another school for such reasons as proximity to afterschool work or medically verified carsickness. So many students and parents utilize such loopholes that in June 1976 only 46 of San Francisco's 118 regular schools were balanced in accordance with court-appointed guidelines.

Recently San Francisco embarked on an effort to use computers for the design of a transportation system that uti-

lizes the smallest number of buses for the shortest possible time. Jim Williams, scheduler in San Francisco's transportation office, told the writer he hopes the computer will cut by 10 percent the number of buses used and provide better service.

San Francisco will have to work hard to avoid mistakes made by other districts. Dolezal, Cross, and Howard describe a computer-assisted plan in Corpus Christi, Texas, that saved money but sacrificed "educational and social considerations." One problem with this plan was that students who lived in already integrated neighborhoods had to be bused to integrate schools in other neighborhoods. In addition, each student was bused for only one year of his or her twelve school years and then returned to the neighborhood school. The point, of course, is that a computer is only as good as its programmers, and programmers must include considerations other than those of time and money.

Although enlarging a transportation system to include busing for desegregation is expensive, it is not as expensive as most people fear. After polling over 2,000 Americans, the Commission on Civil Rights found that most people believe busing for desegregation will add 25 percent to a school's total budget, while the actual cost for a large district is between 2 and 6 percent. In most areas, desegregation can be achieved by efficient use of existing buses with only very modest additional mileage.

Busing is also less time-consuming than most people think. Most children bused for desegregation do not spend long hours on the bus. Among all the districts surveyed in this paper, the average bus ride is twenty minutes, while in most districts the longest bus ride is forty minutes.

In a telephone interview, Reginald Ciokajleo, director of administrative services for the Detroit schools, stressed the importance of radio-equipped buses for transportation efficiency. In Detroit, a bus driver who has trouble can call in immediately to have another bus dispatched, and a child who gets on the wrong bus can be located more easily. In this city, school starting times are staggered so that each bus completes three

full routes every morning, depositing middle school students at 8:00, the first group of elementary children at 8:45, and the second group at 9:15. The same sort of staggered schedules are maintained at closing. This schedule requires one-third fewer buses than an unstaggered system would require.

Handling Violence

The spectre of violence haunts administrators as they begin to implement busing plans. Although most school districts never experience violence (Knorr cites statistics showing that 82 percent of school districts desegregated "without serious disruption"), that spectre never completely disappears.

As one school administrator put it, school districts will do well to "hope for the best and plan for the worst" as far as violence is concerned. Smith, Downs, and Lachman recommend establishing close working relationships with the police and planning specific procedures to handle the most likely types of episodes.

Denver, Colorado, schools included in their desegregation effort a list of guidelines for improving security in elementary schools. This list recommends such things as checking out all groups or gatherings on the perimeter of the grounds throughout the day and designating personnel authorized to call police.

Many school districts have used rumor control techniques to keep rumors from blowing up into major incidents. Knorr describes several such efforts, including a hotline telephone in Newport News, Virginia, allowing people to call in to verify rumors. In this district, the superintendent also emphasized to school personnel their part in preventing rumors by answering questions accurately.

In Stockton, California, before opening day, the administrative office was equipped with emergency phones to be used only by schools that needed to reach administrators in emergency situations. This way clogged phone lines would not prevent schools from getting advice fast.

Discipline Problems

One of the big worries parents have about busing is that

their children will be harrassed by children of other races. Administrators can calm these fears and prevent student disruptions by making it clear to students that physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated. In addition, they can defuse a potentially explosive situation by creating opportunities for positive student interaction even before desegregation begins. Smith, Downs, and Lachman make three recommendations to help in solving discipline problems in newly desegregated schools:

- fair rules and procedures to remove causes for rebellion
- comprehensive written rules to avoid prejudicial treatment
- student participation in planning and decision-making

Riverside's Superintendent Ray Berry told the writer that one big mistake some teachers make in handling discipline problems is to be less demanding of some students than of others. Berry believes that it is necessary to set fair rules that apply to everyone and that it is possible to set high standards of conduct.

Minority parents in many districts complain that more minority students are expelled than Anglo students. For this reason it is important that all schools have a fair system of due process to be applied whenever expulsion is a possible penalty. Bobbitt suggests such due-process safeguards as the following:

- assuming the student is innocent until proven guilty
- establishing guilt only through documentation
- allowing an accused student to present his or her case in a hearing

Bobbitt stresses that teachers often have discipline problems with students of other races because they do not understand cultural differences. He recommends workshops designed to train teachers in dealing effectively with other kinds of people.

Orientation Activities

When students are transported to schools away from their

neighborhoods, things seem to run more smoothly when attention is paid to orienting students and parents to new schools and each other.

Preceding a limited elementary busing program in Sacramento, California, in 1969, students who were to be bused got acquainted with students in their new schools through sports activities, lunches, picnics, and outings. Holden observed that this helped lessen the strangeness of the new school.

In a telephone interview, Doris Cline, public information officer for the Stockton, California, schools, gave students themselves the credit for making busing go smoothly in Stockton in the fall of 1977. A student committee initiated and planned social activities and group discussions before busing began and welcomed new students on the first day of classes.

Parent orientation activities are equally valuable. Hendrick describes a program in Riverside, California, in which parents toured their children's new schools, were given an explanation of the school's program, and "in the fine tradition of parent-teacher gatherings, refreshments were served."

In Stockton, joint parent meetings and school visitations were scheduled as soon as both members of the paired schools were known. In Pasadena, parents are included in desegregated schools as volunteers.

It is important for parental activities in schools to include more than just socializing. Parents need to feel they have some voice in their children's educations. They need to be encouraged to belong to the PTA or to serve on decision-making committees. They also need to feel that teachers and school administrators will listen to and care about their ideas.

THE END OF THE LINE: BETTER SCHOOLS

The only thing that is just about as frightening as the possibility of violence when beginning a busing program is the possibility of "white flight." What if Anglo parents move out of the school district, leaving racially unbalanced schools and a seriously depleted tax base?

It is difficult to find advice for school administrators on how to avoid white flight because the experts are so busy arguing about whether or not the phenomenon really is a consequence of desegregation. In 1975, Coleman feared that white flight in response to "rapid desegregation" might "defeat the purpose of increasing overall contact among races in schools." Yet critics of this thesis are many. Among them are Pettigrew and Green, who painstakingly reexamined Coleman's data on white flight and came to this conclusion:

> We do not believe that Coleman has convincingly proven that school desegregation *causes* "white flight," as he himself candidly admitted in his Civil Rights Commission paper. But we are aware—indeed, as race-relations specialists, we have for fifteen years been aware—that large central cities have long been becoming ever blacker and suburban rings ever whiter.

Finger maintains that cities like Charlotte, North Carolina, have avoided white flight because the area being desegregated is so large that it is difficult to change residence without also changing jobs. Yet this sort of finding is not very helpful to school administrators who have districts where it is easy to flee to the suburbs and still work in the city.

Leaving the experts' findings and turning instead to the advice of administrators who have successfully avoided white flight yields more practical advice. In Oxnard, California, racial and ethnic census data for the last sixteen years have shown that only 1.5 percent of Anglos move from the district every year, and that this figure was unaffected by court-ordered busing. Superintendent Norman Brekke theorized that this is because Oxnard has good schools. Brekke main-

tained that because of Oxnard's high quality instructional program, uniformly good teachers, and effective utilization of state and federal funds, people are reluctant to leave.

Thus, one way to avoid white flight is to improve the educational program in the schools. One way to begin to do this is to make needed changes in the curriculum.

Curriculum Development

Desegregation is almost always accompanied by an upgrading of facilities. School buildings are renovated, rickety desks are replaced, and playgrounds are landscaped. At the same time facilities are being renewed, the old curriculum is often being dusted off, reexamined, and found to need replacement. Part of the reason is that a desegregated setting requires a curriculum that takes into account widely varying levels of achievement and ability.

Schools that must for the first time handle wide ranges in ability may be tempted to resort to ability grouping. Yet this often causes resegregation within the school, stigmatizes or separates out one group of children, and also appears to be educationally unproductive. Many experts therefore recommend avoiding such grouping in favor of an individualized approach that accommodates students of varying abilities within the same classroom.

Knorr found that

> as a direct result of desegregation, 18 of the 29 districts reviewed by the Commission [on Civil Rights] developed and implemented new teaching methods to make the curriculum more responsive. Many school districts attempted to individualize instruction by adding aides and other resource teachers and creating open classrooms to permit smaller groupings of students.

One of the many examples Knorr offers is the Williamsburg, Virginia, school district, which after desegregation introduced an ungraded individualized plan for the development of basic skills and added courses in black history and literature. The results were dramatically improved achievement scores, reduced drop-out rates, and increased percentages of students seeking higher education.

In some cities a court order to begin busing is accompanied by specific recommendations to improve the educational program. Detroit's court order asked for the institution of bilingual education and improved programs in reading, career education, and counseling and guidance.

Riverside's Superintendent Ray Berry told the writer that "by far the most significant results here are the educational changes in the school district." Among these changes, Berry lists "a shift to a more personalized approach to education."

Typical of this shift is a language readiness program in Riverside's kindergarten. For this program the school district developed its own individualized materials for children to take home and work on with help from their parents. The program allows students of widely varying abilities to work at their own pace and also involves parents in the learning process, which makes the children more excited about school, Berry claims.

Hendrick describes one Riverside school's technique of assessing each child's skills and weaknesses in reading and then grouping the children not by level of achievement or of ability but by the particular area in which they need improvement. With this technique, there is less danger of both the stigma and the resegregation often caused by ability grouping.

Demands for cross-cultural and bilingual educational programs are often a part of current court orders for desegregation. Knorr asserts that "a curriculum that reflects various cultural and racial backgrounds is essential to desegregated education."

In Oxnard, California, a court order that required curriculum modification for multiethnic students has resulted in an extensive program in ethnic studies for which the district produced its own instructional materials. In this city there are 100 bilingual classes that receive funds from both the state of California and ESEA Title I. One-third of the professional staff is bilingual, while paraprofessional bilingual instructional aides are utilized in all schools.

Whether desegregation has a positive effect on achievement scores is difficult to determine. Schofield, after an extensive survey of the literature concerning the effects of bus-

ing and desegregation, concluded:

> Regrettably, social science has provided few substantial, definite answers to these questions, partly because of the complex nature of the problems and partly because of inadequate research.

A large majority of the districts mentioned in these pages report an increase in achievement scores following desegregation, especially after several years. But such findings are very unscientific, especially because school districts with falling achievement scores rarely publish this fact.

Knorr believes the research suggests that "improved achievement scores are more a function of the educational process than a function of the racial composition of the school." That is, it seems reasonable that desegregation by itself will not do much to improve achievement scores; improvement depends largely on the kinds of curriculum a school has.

Curricular changes following desegregation can be costly. Districts may utilize financial aid from Title VII of the Education Amendments of 1972. Elwell has described how Title VII can provide funds for remedial services or new curricula and instructional materials as well as many other components of desegregation with the exception of busing itself.

In the process of making the educational improvements that must accompany desegregation, the role of the principal is pivotal. Chesler, Guskin, and Erenberg urge that principals be included in districtwide curriculum planning efforts because only they have extensive enough knowledge of the needs of each school. Eash and Rasher contend that desegregation demands "active involvement on the part of principals in the everyday process of classroom instruction."

San Francisco's Yvon Johnson expressed his belief that parents are much more apt to accept busing if they feel that the school to which their child is bused is a "desirable place to go." More importantly, Johnson believes the single most important reason a school seems desirable to parents is a good principal who has built a good staff.

Staff Development

In the same way that a busing plan calls for changes in

curriculum, it also necessitates a staff with new kinds of expertise and insights. Most experts recommend staff development or inservice training programs to help staff become better able to do their jobs and to handle the big changes that desegregation brings.

After carefully studying teachers' problems in Louisville, Kentucky, during their first year of busing, Banks concluded that many of these problems could have been avoided by a comprehensive inservice program dealing with such things as how to handle:

- discipline problems
- academic and emotional needs of different kinds of students
- communication problems
- anxiety and low morale generated by change

Since Louisville had only forty-five days to plan its busing program, Banks suggests the district should have begun these programs even before receiving the final court order.

Chesler, Guskin, and Erenberg see staff development sessions as integral to the desegregation effort. They recommend sessions to help the administrative staff work as a unit and to help teachers avoid low expectations of minority students, become aware of and deal with racist feelings, and effectively relate classroom activities to the larger world.

Smith, Downs, and Lachman believe inservice education should cover such topics as individualized learning techniques and black history, and they provide administrators with a sample inservice program.

Many experts believe that staff development for desegregation should be practical rather than theoretical. Monti and Laue discovered that after sessions dealing with feelings about other races, many participants protested that what they really wanted to learn about was what they could expect from black and white students and what problems they would face on a day-to-day basis.

Sullivan describes how these concerns were dealt with in Berkeley before desegregation began by first allowing teachers

to observe students of other races and then giving them temporary assignments teaching these children. According to Reilly, Berkeley held afternoon sessions for teachers and aides in which small groups discussed problems arising during classroom experiences.

Shelton describes a Tampa, Florida, plan in which community relations specialists (whose salaries were paid through an Emergency School Assistance Program grant) held seminars for teachers, administrators, and students and helped them work out problems as they arose.

In Riverside, California, a school district that has had experience with integration inservice programs since 1965, Superintendent Ray Berry has concluded that by far the most productive effort is a task-oriented approach. Berry recommended working with an entire task group to first determine what their problems and needs are and then bringing in resources to help them deal with these problems. Berry believes that inservice training must derive from what is necessary to provide students with a good education, and that this sort of approach (unlike sensitivity groups or lectures) avoids polarization of staff members.

In Oxnard, California, a district that utilizes state and federally funded programs as well as spends $70,000-80,000 of its own money on staff development, courses are offered dealing with cultural variables affecting the educational process. These courses are available with college credit and reduced tuition cost.

CONCLUSION

The number and complexity of the issues touched on in the preceding pages attest to the fact that busing for desegregation is not easy. But anyone who reads the newspapers already knows that.

Experiences of school districts across the country, however, indicate that busing is not impossible either. In some districts it proceeds rather smoothly, without violence, discipline problems, drops in achievement scores, or white flight.

In fact, in some districts, accomplishing desegregation through busing not only provides students with broader cultural experiences, it also is the impetus for educational innovations that give children better educational experiences than they had before. As Riverside Superintendent Ray Berry put it, "It invigorated our whole school system."

And nobody who reads the newspapers ever would have guessed that.

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